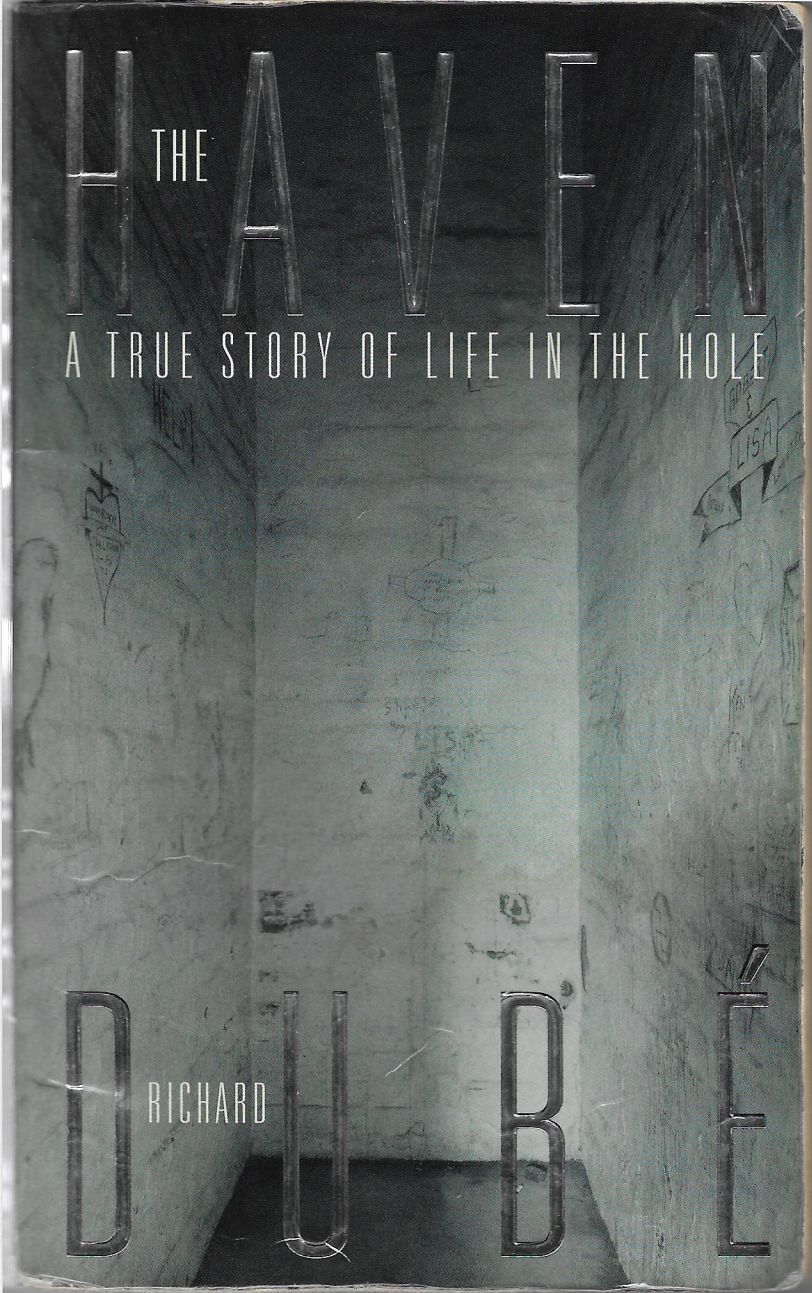
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*The Haven*
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*To Shari*

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# Introduction

My story begins in solitary confinement at Millhaven super-maximum-security penitentiary.

The book uses three voices. The main narrative triggers fantasies and flashbacks. Such fantasies are detaching mechanisms commonly adopted by thousands of cons serving hard time. They appear in italics in the book and begin in Chapter 1, "Into the Abyss." The flashbacks are real memories, the first of which also occurs in Chapter 1. The flashbacks begin with a boldface heading.

I spent years inside the infamous mechanical monstrosities. There I came to realize that the majority of hardened and dangerous cons are incarcerated because of substance-abuse problems.

We, the callous killers and calculating robbers, are nothing more than addicts and alcoholics. Now dangerous and demented, we're caught in a vicious cycle: getting stoned, committing crimes and landing

in jail, only to come out and do it all over again and again and again.

We, the robbers and killers, follow typical pathways into addiction, and denial is the common denominator. We begin to experiment by smoking pot and hash. We consume large quantities of beer and drink more than our fair share of hard liquor. Some of us get into heavy drugs like cocaine, heroine, ice, crystal, speed, acid and crack. And of course we have those who add to the toxic mix by popping prescription and non-prescription pills.

What's the result? We drop out or are tossed out of school. Some live in turmoil at home, while many others are thrown out and end up on the street, stealing to survive. Some of us work for a living but jeopardize our jobs by partying, scamming, fighting and manipulating others.

Young people are more vulnerable to addiction because their bodies are not fully mature. Beer is more powerful today than it was in the 1980s, up from five percent to seven and a half percent alcohol. Meanwhile, a recently developed cocaine derivative, crack, is one of the most addictive street drugs ever. We understand only when it's too late that youth, alcohol and other drugs make a potent cocktail. Without realizing it, we become addicted. Drinking and taking drugs without ever attempting



to control our intake, we don't know if we can. Never trying to quit, we don't know if we can.

I know this in a way that few people do, as my story will show.

## 24

# True Colors

I hang up the phone satisfied that David Cole will represent me. Looking at the fat screw, I smile. Should I go back to my cell peacefully? These doorknobs know how hard I can be to subdue, don't they?

My mandatory parole is not something to tamper with. It's MANDATORY. I'll show them I know how to beat the system. This place is crazy and violent, but I know a few tricks of my own. I've been taught very well, and by some of the best warriors. You guys won't win with me. You have no idea who you're dealing with. I can do my time. I have heart and soul and spirit, but you're cowards. David Cole will get me out of this one.

Back in my cell, I hear Big Pat playing his opera music. I like Big Pat. He always gives the screws a fight for their lives. What about that time he ripped his bed out of the floor and broke through a row of cell walls? That was great. What about that time





when he slammed that big fat porker in the face with his cuffs on? He broke the pig's nose and knocked him out cold. Way to go, Pat. You don't take any guff from these jerks. You have to get out and take them out for keeps.

Good ol' Ury is down a few cells, and this giant of a specimen is extremely dangerous. He stabbed a guy in the gym area for God knows what reason. I remember when he first came to the Haven. He was timid and shy. What's happened to Ury? At six foot six and 230 pounds, he didn't need a knife. Did it feel good? Always wanted to know what it felt like to stick someone?

Little Wayne . . . can I call him Wiener also? He wants to give me his cassette of religious songs. How can he listen to this and kill people at the same time? How many years did he do in those special-handling units? Four, five years? This place is really something. Praying one minute and killing someone the next.

All the murderers are down here today. Some are being shipped out to the special-handling units; some are waiting for court dates for various murders they've committed in jail, while some just beat the living daylights out of a few other cons. One dropped some weights on a guy's head because he called him a goof. The guy's almost crippled and he'll be disfigured for life. This is good, because the victim will

always think of the avenger when he looks in the mirror. I know the thinking.

Kenny, Derek and Moe are here because they beat up some of my hometown boys. Chris was kicked so hard in the groin he bled from his ears. He's in the infirmary now. Claude had to check in because Ernie was going to kill him, but I don't know for what. I guess it's none of my business, but I know they showed disrespect by changing the channel on the television set in the common room without asking permission.

I'm going to have to arbitrate this deadly dispute a little later, but for now I have to prepare for my hearing.

Just don't punk me off. I won't talk. I won't trust. I'll just let you have it . . .

**The Bay, 1982**

Before Big Claude gets back from his appointment, I encounter two more guys I know. I didn't know they were in this joint. I've spent many nights drinking, fighting, robbing and partying with Dave and Bo back home. In fact, Bo is one of the boys who'd done a lot of pen time and described the experience to me on a few occasions.

Bo was sent here two years ago. Ignoring my warning, he'd used one of my boosters for an armed



robbery. The kid ratted him out and now Bo's locked up on a ten-year sentence.

A barrel-chested man with tattoos over every inch of his large frame, Bo has a thick mane of reddish blond hair and speaks from the corner of his mouth.

With a brief hello, Bo quickly pulls me aside. His eyes anxious, he's excited about something. He speaks quietly, then extracts a foot-long steel bar from the back of his pants. He goes on to explain there are two men on the other side of the range—two men who have recently been transferred from Millhaven—who want to see me. One of them is named John.

Nervousness cramps my stomach . . .

My mind is still racing as Bo says he's not sure what these guys want, but goes on to say they could very well be hitmen hired to fulfill the contract on me. Now I'm terrified. How could Bo even know about the sting? How can this be?

Without another word, Bo hands me the bar, turns his thick back on me and walks away with Dave scurrying close behind.

I can't believe this. The pussies send me to the lions' den and run away like yellow-bellied rats. I'm tempted to use the steel bar on their empty heads. Had I not helped these idiots on the street? Yes, I had, and on more than one occasion. Then they just abandon me, in the middle of the range, with a foot-